2: Wilson M-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

769 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is
184 your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be
765 prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the par-
768 ticipants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by
587 the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who
[423] will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'to go to the ashes' (*[illegible]*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

606

taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 778
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 585
[illegible], but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 604
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the
marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth
which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubusungu* [illegible] 851
is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 585
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not
betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for
her when she grows up. She drinks the [illegible] medicine, she
washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the
hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her
brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance.
The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is
shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the
rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband,
and returning with the [illegible] are performed. She does not wash
with him ritually.

(4) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 753
'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point.
Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not
perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is
sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the diviner says:
"Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water
and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grand-
father, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the
doctor says: "The [illegible] (meaning a village) have cursed
her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse
which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper
saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they
not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of
the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades
and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

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[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80-4.

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
tested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they 784
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 578
relations, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 776
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 784
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!"' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tata*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*jo mpala gwangu*)[1] for cattle are important (*indalu*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakasunikeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*basose*), and prayers are addressed 776
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

784
Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 776

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[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

776 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am alone here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *[illegible]* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *[illegible]* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
● 782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*[illegible]*). If an animal is sacrificed the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *[illegible]* meat from the foreleg of the beast'[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*[illegible]*)'.

783 613 The proper person to approach the shades is (among commoners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

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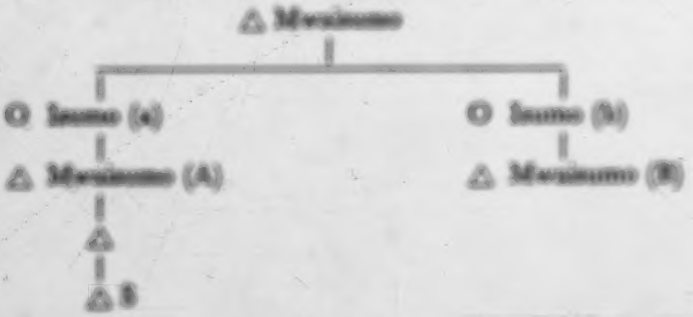
[1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *intsonyama* which is roasted in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 845 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (abipwa) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against ubulungu and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 631

[60]



At a ritual to 'cut the rope' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been buried and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 5 sons, 3 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived near there) could not take the medicine at his in-law's home, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. [illegible] 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
604 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his neighbours who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young man. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

769 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
606 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relations or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shades and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicines but do not
621 drink medicines or sneeze. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

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[1] In Ngonde they are slaves, commoners.

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the
status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage
ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless im-
portant, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a
Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed.
At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own
choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older
unyago by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man
who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the
rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sor-
cery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly
women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but
the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and
organise the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is
clearly recognised. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner'
of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she
will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of
Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a rela-
tive. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her.
She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact
observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so
important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as
unganga, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since
unganga has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
reprove and bless an erring son without the mediation of any
priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the
kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwaki-
ende did in the case quoted) and come very close to organising a
ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umsyuki*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides
their legal functions as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [575]
the officiant to organise the ritual, and are specifically responsible
for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did 775
not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my 782
fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing.

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, 775
and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they 828
bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them.

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose
dreams come true we call *abasololi*—prophets. These men sometimes [791]
dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kasitile and tell what he said.

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 *(a) The death of Katasya*

[28] The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angumbwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwaimpopasile. His case (ungano) was thus:

782 The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likwyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

[781] But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but
761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village
578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 761 878

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUBONGOLA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katanya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwansila came in. He told me that Katanya is still alive, but 786
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 762
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is this:
the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and
it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull
and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' [433]
and later they will give him a little calf worth you. The bull was very
big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when
he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have
bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they
themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone.
I, Mwaisyapulela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 762
therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a
sacrifice ([illegible]) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Katanya not do so?

MWAKASUPU: No, Katanya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katanya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWAKASUPU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 787
for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, 754
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery.
See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look
in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him.
Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you
want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let
a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWAKASUPU: Yes.

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWAISUMO: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Kasanya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWAISUMO: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwasilo, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
554 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in dispute, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cows, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

752 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Kasanya's bull.

MWAISUMO: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwaisyapalala and Kapugisa and two others. There were four. He had built in Bushali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Kasanya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwaisyapalala and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWAISUMO: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
787 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the [illegible] snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakasyunale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

Mbyuma: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they were ill I carried them to my house.'* 784 578

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A woman: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both ill?'

Another woman: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

Mwakasyuka: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to your place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

Mbyuma: 'No one told me.'

The woman: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

Kasyombe: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

Another woman: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

Mbyuma: 'Yes, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A woman: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyusa who is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyusa is angry because he has taken cattle."' 787

The Mother (Mwakyusa's sister): 'We like him (the shade), let him come.' 783

Woman: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unmentionable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our homes, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unmentionable jealousy [[illegible]].'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakikonde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakikonde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness comes.' They say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads. 782

They also prayed, confirming their anger in the case of Kasyombe, [78[illegible]]

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* It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary ([illegible]). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

● 762 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[78] stopped speaking Kasyomale was ill. Then her husband charged her
with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
759 since we came from confessing anger.' Then Kasyomale grew sulky and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place. Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking? You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said: 'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?' Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[37] He took the case to Mwakisisya, the village headman, and lost it. Then the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakisonde went to attend to the medicines
758 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medicines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakisonde, because he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior, followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink, and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all over their bodies.

opened a trading store at Karonga, under Mr. Monteith Fotheringham, a man of great vigour and capacity. His presence aroused the hostility of the Arabs, who feared the loss of their slaving profits, and a period of fighting followed, in which the Konde took sides with the white man as their one hope. After a great encounter with their enemies, the defeated Konde took refuge in the Kambwe lagoon, the dry reeds on the margin of which were set on fire by the victors. The helpless natives leaped into the water, where many were drowned, and numbers were taken by the crocodiles which swarmed in the lagoon. In 1895 a small force was moved up by Sir Harry Johnston, High Commissioner for the newly formed British Protectorate, and the Arabs were defeated, and their leader, Mlozi, hanged the same day. From that time the Konde have progressed in peace under the influence of Government, Trade, and Missions. 175

One incident, very striking in itself, may be given as indicating the influence of Chungu. On one of her trips the *Domira*, the steamer of the African Lakes Corporation, went ashore on the sands near Karonga. Vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were made, with the help of great gangs of natives, to float her; and at length Chungu was asked to lend his powerful aid. This was Chungu Mwakasungula II. Taking with him a white cock, he went with his councillors to where the stranded steamer lay helpless on the sand. The following prayer, which he offered, was given to 175 782 643

175 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood
● 782 near him:

643 "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Magemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabara," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Magemo; E! Kyabara." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

175 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on
177 intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity
arose to give cohesion to the various families of the
[797] Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian
missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans
visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for
a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia
Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

461/ marriage settlement; the wealth some one has
521/ brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange
522 impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241/ Should the rains be late, the situation may be
512 serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on.
[782] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three [redacted], the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 783.

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

643 645 771 chief. For Changa must not *die* a natural death; the land would be turned into water should such a calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Siku na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God *die?*" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 645 766 No announcement of the death was made. One of the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if any came to consult Changa a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of burial. [567] [762] Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kutebite ku Mphande,*" Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down
to running water, and the calf, when delivered, im-
mediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for
their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the
owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water,
resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given
to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under
which such a thing is possible, render it highly prob-
able that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been
very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times
of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact
that the physiological possibility of it is known to the
natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have
771 told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not
because he would have seen tokens of their religious-
ness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by,
and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must
look deep, and live long among them, before that
side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness.
There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accom-
panied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion,
and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly
religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so
[787] than many others. *Leaving native Christians aside,*
241 the great majority of the people consult a diviner
782 before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well;
or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way
of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a
certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will
come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and 241
petition made as follows: 782

> "Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the 241
Konde country, but many chiefs have special prac- 782
tices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is 622
that of the chief Mwaisumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaisumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown.

The first hoeing is *ukuchera*, gathering the heaps 241
of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is 784
not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the

CHAPTER X

Hunting & Fishing

224
784

STRICT game laws have made hunting a thing of the past; or at best it is done secretly, when it is not a wild, excited scramble after some unfortunate animal that has wandered into the gardens in search of food. Before the white man took over the country, however, hunting was an important and regular part of the year's work. The diviner fixed upon a favourable day for setting out, and the whole community met for the preliminary ceremonies, when prayer was offered to the spirits, and through them to God. All quarrels must be made up before the hunters set out, and there must be no sin or strife in the village while they are absent, else they will not all come back alive. In hunting, as in every important act of his life, the Konde must be sure of the goodwill of the spirits, for a single angry spirit may spoil a whole season's work, and render abortive every effort of the hunter, just as he may bring to nothing every other kind of activity. This permanent possibility of interference from the underworld is one of the fundamental facts of the inner life of the people, and real understanding of the native mind does not begin until this elementary fact has been grasped.

224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusk, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusk without question; they were his umwana (child).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 787 782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, 224
where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader 787
cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with 782
beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered :

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Basangu" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, prohibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. 224 A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-holes which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts.

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

226 Women have dipping baskets without top or bottom, which they dip at random, and when fish is plentiful they get a good catch. Boys prepare bunches of worms fastened to a cord and thrown into the stream. Sitting down on the banks, they sing or whistle to attract the fish. A sharp pull when a nibble is felt lands the unwary fish.

Nets large and small are in use on the lake. The larger are furnished with stone sinkers and wood floats, and are operated very much as in Europe, a canoe feeding out the net, which is hauled in from both ends with the catch enclosed. The smaller nets are sometimes operated by one man, heavier ones requiring two; and there are tiny dipping nets, of which a man will sometimes have one in each hand. Nets must be treated with medicine before being used. The Abakisi, a small tribe living at Matema near the north end of the lake, stalk the fish under water, and are said to catch all kinds in this way.

226
782 In many places the first fish caught is not sent to the village, but is cooked and given to little children to eat, the bones being thrown back into the water. The idea is that this is one way of giving the spirits their portion; I have already pointed out that beer offered to the spirits is in some families poured into the hands of children, who drink it, though adults may not do so. And flesh offered at the family place of prayer (the *ikiyinja*) is similarly given next day to children, who are told that it is the gift of their grandfather.

251 The remainder of the catch is dried over a slow

of these are expressed in archaic language, which is 776
not in use at all to-day, except in these and similar 538
sayings. Thus we have, "*Chikulu ku osi*," the Great One is everywhere; "*Gwende mwamwo*," go where you will (you will hear of God). "*Imbwa yilwene pa lwigi*," literally means, the dog is fighting at the door, but the actual meaning is, God is within you. Expressions like these are very numerous, and, even in their archaic form, are in common use every day.

The names in use for the Deity give some indica- 776
tion of how He is regarded. The name most commonly used in Konde is *Kyala*, but although it is now almost exclusively used in public worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in hymns, it is, perhaps, the weakest of all the Divine names. For it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tenende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkurumuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyaubiri*, the Unseen; *Kaleri*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Ndorombwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb *kutorombeka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also.

Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, 782
who in many cases are conceived as having power of

782 themselves to grant a petition; but more frequently they are entreated to carry the petitions to God, who alone can give what is asked for. "Why do you ask me for rain?" says Chungu, when his impatient people come to him, "God owns the rain, and only He can give it." "But," reply the people, "common men cannot pray. Pray you to your ancestors, and let them carry your prayer to God." There is, however, also direct address in the formula, "Be gracious to us, O God, and hear the prayers of those whom we have named," the reference being to the spirits, to whom the main body of the petition is addressed. At birth, prayer is offered for the welfare of the child, "May God be gracious to you, my son." The dead are with God, and the spirits who were in the underworld before the entrance there of the souls of men, see His face, "for these are they who see God." Sickness also may be a divine infliction, though it may also be due to the wrath of an offended spirit. A heathen chief who came to see me during an illness, said, "You will recover if it is God's will," words which might well be a mere echo of what he had heard from Christian teachers; but the impression they made on me was that he was expressing a pious thought from the depths of his own being.

776 When I was told that Chungu had once crossed the lake on dry land, and asked how that could be, the answer, quietly and seriously given, was that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; why therefore should the statement be doubted? God gives to prophets their dream-visions, and to others their

773 776 approach of the Angoni warriors, and where to flee for safety when they arrived. He asked for *bhang* and a pipe, and these were laid on the ground, and soon smoke was seen issuing from the earth. For *Mbasi* was not seen; they only heard his voice. Then he became communicative. "The Angoni are coming now," he told them, "go at once to Masoko with your wives and children and cattle." The unfortunate Mwakanyamata did as he was advised, only to be robbed of all his cattle by another friend of *Mbasi*, to whom the deceitful God sent word to have no mercy on the cattle of a fool like Mwakanyamata, who believed what he was told! And to this day Mwakanyamata is laughed at as the man who allowed himself to be deceived by the wiles of *Mbasi*.

According to another version, *Mbasi* was a rival claimant to Divine honours with *Ndorombwike* Himself. Originally he was a serpent, killed in the dim past by the chief Mwakibinga. *Mbasi* returned to earth as a spirit, seeking to persuade men to worship him, offering them wealth in cattle if they agreed. But men refused, "for the dead do not return." One chief, Mwatonoka, accepted the false God, but was defeated in battle by Mwakarobo, a final proof that *Mbasi* was a deceiver.

776 782 Stories of *Mbasi* and his activities are numerous. He used to do some of his own work; that is to say, instead of sending one of his prophets to demand what he wanted, he shouted from the great *ilisyeto* (grave of a chief; place of prayer) at Lubaga in Nserya, and made his own demands. Milk, beer,

bananas, were placed at the door of Mwakindingo 776
his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was 782
found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mbasi* had come to receive the offerings.

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mbasi* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the fading divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Karonga a man 776
called Firaguli, who after his death became a godlet, 753
and lived on the mountain which now goes by his 755
name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or godlets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Karonga, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Henga people. Firaguli went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed

Of the persons officially connected with the spirits,
643 the most important is the chief. It has already been
622 said that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God";
782 he is also the man who speaks with authority to the
spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest; he is the *unnyago*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

778 With regard to places of worship: the "high
place" is always at the grave of the dead chief; and

776 water. When, later, men came, more favoured of God, the waters retired to the lakes and pools, and there these spirits exist to this day, at enmity with men, whom they seek to destroy. On the lake, during [782] a storm, they are still to be heard, demanding a victim to be thrown to them whom they may " eat." In the past, if a canoe was overtaken by a storm, one of the rowers was thrown into the water, whereupon the storm ceased, and the others arrived in safety.

At many places all over the district there are pools in which these spirits dwell. The most interesting is at Kisyombe, and about it many stories are told, and believed, which throw an interesting light on the Konde mind. When the chief of three generations ago was a very old man, it was prophesied that at his death the lake would recede, the fish would die, bush would grow where water was, and a great disease would carry off many of the people. And it all happened. But the lake, as it receded, left a pool in which some spirits were imprisoned. It is now partly silted up with sand, and treacherous to walk upon. If a man finds himself sinking as he walks over it, he calls out that he belongs to Kisyombe, whereupon he is pushed up from below by the water-spirits, who own Kisyombe's power. A boy who sank right through, but was returned, was directed by the spirits to give a report of all that he saw, and particularly he must insist that these spirits are *abandu* (human beings). If no sacrifice is offered the spirits take their due, by snatching at passing children; but it is long since the last child was taken. The pool at Rungwe is

CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

771 THE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

•782 776 On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the spirits themselves forgotten. 776 Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by failure of crops, of increase of livestock, of children, by too little or too much rain, or by ill-success in hunting or fishing; and, very emphatically, by a sudden death. 776

The prayer and ceremony at the presentation of a new-born child have already been given. More pathetic is the prayer offered when a child is ill. Standing at the sacred banana grove, the family representative prays: 782

> " . . . and now this little one whom I hold in my hands, be gracious to him. He [she] has come into a world of sickness, of cold, of all the troubles that you yourselves were familiar with. Let him lie in peace. Let none in the spirit-land be angry with him. To-morrow he will be full-grown, and he will bring you beer, flesh, flour. Pray to God for him. O God, who art Lord of all, let thy breath be cool upon him (liti, Let thy spittle be cool upon him)."

Then, spitting on the child's breast and back, he says:

> "And thou child, may there be life in thee. God be gracious unto thee. Live in peace and be not wearied."

Not all diseases are due to the anger of the spirits; a natural illness is one that yields to treatment. It is the act of God, and when the right medicine has been used, cure will follow, for God does not need to be entreated as the spirits do. Yet the spirits carry their petitions to God, as if He did need to be entreated, [753]

•782 but the Konde see no contradiction there. If a diviner has to be consulted, the process is long, and the result not certain, at least at first. The omission of a name from the list of ancestors may cause delay, for the omitted one will refuse to go to God with the petition, and unanimity is of the very essence of prayer. Or, again, the wrong person may offer the prayer and offerings which follow upon discovery, by the diviner, of the offended spirit; this is so important that I have known a man go a hundred and forty miles to his elder brother, to have his prayers correctly offered.

The *umputi* (person who prays; the name is now applied to all clergymen) goes to the graveside, or he stands at the banana grove set apart for the purpose, or on the verandah of his house, and prays:

> "My fathers, I have come to you because I have found that you have caused the illness of my friend. You are angry with him because he has given you no beer. Now the *malesi* (cereal from which beer is made) is here; behold it, all of you, with your eyes, and when it is made I will bring it to you and you shall be satisfied. Then let the sickness leave the body of our friend."

Then taking water into his mouth, he squirts it out, *pu* (*puta*, pray).

When the beer has been made, he goes again to pray:

> "You, and you, and you [naming them], come to the feast. You who died by a crocodile, who

were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by 782
lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease."

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as 576
dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above.

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not 761
in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 782 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

The flesh is now eaten roasted, and the stomach of the animal, filled with medicines not known to me, is given to an old man, and the skin placed on his back; with these he goes, by night, through the whole district covered by the prayer. If the journey is not finished in one night, he lies in a village until it is dark again, care being taken that he is seen by none, and completes his circuit. On his return, the chief calls all the people together, and declares that if the disease is the work of witchcraft, the evil ones will certainly be discovered and punished; but if it is the work of the spirits, "we have prayed to them to send it far hence to the Basango." Family ceremonies, of a similar nature, follow, each head of a family offering a little beer to his ancestors. At Karonga this latter ceremony has almost entirely been abandoned. There, however, the prophet to whom the coming of smallpox has been revealed goes about the villages, crying, "*ilibofu, ilibofu, ilibofu*" (smell, of dead bodies), a dreadful cry, which brings the people in a mass to the chief to demand the performance of the ceremonies. Similar prayers are offered when mumps, dysentery, or widespread eye disease visits the community. 753 782

When a man is about to set out on a journey, his father gives him his blessing, and prays to the spirits for him, adding: 782●

> "May lion and leopard and hyena, crocodile and snake and falling tree, be far from you, and may you return in peace."

•782 A person involved in a lawsuit was similarly prayed for:

> "Be merciful, and let his case be good. May he escape and return to us; for those men are gods; whom they imprison they imprison, and whom they kill they kill."

The men referred to are the European Administrative Officers, before whom cases are heard. If the case is tried by a native chief, the clause is omitted. A man who has been away at work, in the employment of a white man, gives, on his return in safety, a piece of cloth to the family representative, who, after it has been laid up in the house for a time, asks the permission of the spirits to wear it, for it is theirs; and, taking their permission for granted, leaves a tiny rag to represent it. Less careful persons wear it at once, the rag being enough to keep the spirits in good temper. The numerous other occasions on which worship is offered are described in the appropriate chapters.

Greatest of all Konde ceremonies is the prayer for rain. And around this ceremony much erroneous information has collected; for the so-called "rain-maker" does not make the rain; his duties are quite different. The rain is the gift of God; it is His to give or withhold as He sees fit. All that living men can do is to pray to the spirits, who, in turn, present the petition to God; and God, if there is no obstacle among men themselves, will grant the petition.

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Of sacred objects connected with rain ceremonies, the most important is the *mulima* (an old word meaning *the world*), which is never seen by anyone except

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was 782 originally in the possession of Chungu, but some 778 generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes 782 clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes [787] without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

782 here given is obtained from descriptions by persons who were actually present at prayer offered by Chungu. [643] The decision to pray does not originate with the chief himself; it comes from the people, who approach Chungu through the subordinate chiefs, and Chungu, after reminding them that only God can give rain, consents to pray.

In the past a human sacrifice was offered, and the flesh of the victim, burned and ground to powder, was distributed over the district as a "medicine" guaranteed to ensure a good crop. This has long ceased at Karonga; the last known occurrence of it farther north was in 1907, when a boy of about ten was sacrificed; and in 1917 a boy mysteriously disappeared, not without suspicion that he was offered in sacrifice. I have been told that human sacrifice is offered in the Kinga Mountains even now; but, except for repeated statements, I have no evidence. The victim, always a boy, is made to drink beer until he dies, when his body is burned and ground to powder for distribution. The child is selected in secret conclave by the chiefs, and no one knows that the tragedy has taken place until public announcement has been made, except the parents of the boy, whose disappearance must have been known to them. Weeping for the victim is prohibited.

For the ordinary sacrifice offered to-day, a black or white ox or cow, preferably the latter, has to be found, and brought to Chungu. The owner must be paid, and there is a case known where refusal to do so led to the failure of the whole ceremony. When the

782 animal is found Chungu and his councillors go to the river to wash, and must not return to their wives until the whole ceremony is over. Arrived at the *ilisyeto* (burial place), the chief and those who are with him salute the dead by lying prone on their backs, then turning to the right, and finally assuming a sitting position, a soft hand-clapping accompanying these movements. Chungu then, sitting on the ground, and with his eyes open, addresses his ancestors :

> " Hear me, ye who were before us [naming them]. I have brought this ox for the whole people. We cry to you. Why are you angry with us ? Why do you not go to God to pray for us ? Our children are dying. Pray for us. Thou who art not seen with the eyes of men, hear the petitions of those whom we name unto thee."

The animal is then killed by a blow on the back of the neck with an axe, and the flesh laid in little heaps upon the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down. The chief and his followers also feast until the ants come out and attack the portions laid down for the spirits, when all flee, for the spirits have come to accept the sacrifice, and it is well not to be too near them. For three days those who took part in the ceremony remain in their houses, for they have been in contact with unseen powers, and are dangerous until the effect has passed off. If the animal brought for sacrifice breaks its halter and gets away during the prayers, it is a token that something is wrong, and all proceedings are stayed until the wrong is discovered and righted.

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•782 791 Now begin the duties of the person who is called the rainmaker. In the Misuku Hills there is a rain forest, the trees of which drop moisture. Word is sent to the local chief that the spirits have accepted the prayers of Chungu; and a quantity of rain-tree twigs is sent and delivered to the rainmaker. This official, known as the *unsusi*, goes to the lake by night to fetch water, which is placed in a pot along with the twigs, and some small smooth black or white stones, the pot being now covered with banana leaves, and placed near a small bush "where God stores the rain." The rainmaker now goes into his house, where he prays, lying on his face; a position which he retains until rain has actually fallen. Chungu also continues in prayer.

The rainmaker is a quite inferior official. In the past he might be a slave, or any other unimportant person appointed for the duty. His function seems to be that of a "conductor," through whose person, or acts, or abstinence from action, the continuance of the rain granted at the prayer of the chief is assured. He must not cut his hair during the rainy season, for the heavens would dry up if he did. He must not wash in water, for that would bring on a flood; in June he may begin cautiously to wash himself, and later he may indulge in the luxury of a full bath, and at the same time he may cut, but not shave, his hair. He must not be angry or scold during the rains, lest he bring on a lightning storm with fatal effects to some one. Further, during all those months he may not roast maize or ground-nuts, the leaping of which

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while being roasted is like the play of lightning, and 791
would bring on a fatal stroke from the sky.

In 1912 "God's rain" fell as usual in December; 782
but in January came drought which continued into 731
February. Urgent messages were sent to Chungu, who replied that he was helpless, as the *mulima* was lost. After diligent inquiry, it was found to be in possession of Mwandosya, who refused to act, because in the distribution of the cattle of a deceased relative another chief, Kasikula, had taken more than his share. Kasikula was ordered by Chungu to restore the balance, but he refused, and only agreed when the men present took up clubs to thrash him into obedience. Prayer was then offered in the usual way, and Mwandosya announced that God had commanded him to forgive the offender. "Rain," he said, "will come at once. You Karonga, will be overtaken by it before you can reach home." And so it fell out. Rain came in torrents, preceded by a great storm which overthrew a number of trees in a neighbouring estate, and greatly injured the fine avenue leading to the Mission House.

Now for some days there had been much thunder, 782
and dark clouds covered the sky; anyone could tell that the rain was near. But for the Konde that was just the point. The rain was there, and it was quite obviously being withheld. Why else did it not fall? And it did fall when the wrong was righted, and the prayers offered. Who but a white man could doubt the relation of cause and effect?

One or two local variations are worth noting. At Karonga an offering of black cloth is made along with

•782 the other things presented. In many places a pot half filled with beer is left all night at the grave where the offerings are made, and if the beer is found in the morning to have risen to the top, and filled the pot, it is a sign that the spirits have agreed to go to God with the petition. If it has not risen there is something wrong, and the wrong must be made good. It sometimes happens that the animal sacrifice is not killed, but is kept by the guardian of the grave, and belongs thenceforth, with all its issue, to the spirits. It is used just like any other cow, but it must not be sold.

An old custom seldom now followed is the children's rain dance. Boys and girls, carrying ashes in pots in one hand, and a small branch in the other, go to the cross-roads, with a leader who carries a fowl. They move with a kind of hopping and leaping dance, and, arrived at the cross-roads, they gather around the leader, who sings:

> "Let all old things fly away; we get new things from God. His house is great. He has room for everything."

Ashes and branches are now thrown in a heap, and the fowl left there, while the children return as they went, with song and dance.

782 789 It is remarkable that while rain is often so difficult to bring on, it is in the power of anyone, who has just cause, to stop it. But just cause he must have, and he must secure the co-operation of the spirits. This being done by prayer, offered by the family

representative, or by the chief if he can be induced 782
to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties 789
a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power 797
over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another 782 practically every year; but it is now done in secret, an idea having got abroad that the white man disapproves of such practices. Do forbidden acts still find a place in these ceremonies? Who can tell? In some matters the native is as secret as the grave and the European who claims to know "all about it" is a deluded man.

759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

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789 And this same conviction, that the native doctors are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

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782 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration

757 of the medicine, is a religious act. Mwenekasangamara, 782 the doctor referred to in the previous chapter, used the following prayer, when gathering herbs; it was given to me by his son, who got it from his father. And Mwenekasangamara claimed that it had descended through many generations in his family.

> "Be merciful to me, thou Creator. The medicine which I am seeking is the same that my fathers sought, and it was Thou that didst open their eyes. Show me the roots, and I shall know them. But if my patient is not to recover, hide them from me, and I shall know that it is Thy will."

The following, used when medicine is being administered in a case of ulcer that has resisted treatment, is rather a statement than a prayer:

> "If this disease has come from God, medicine will heal it; for God, who made us, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties. But if it has come from men, I cannot heal it."

The last sentence means that witchcraft or the anger of a spirit is at the root of the trouble, and steps must be taken to discover the facts. Then, but only then, the ulcer will yield to treatment.

789 But behind both the prayer and the medicine, or at any rate in addition to them, there is something else. There are certain medicines which are never administered to patients; their function is to give power to the doctor himself; administered to a

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769 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave
789 to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande
none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to
764 dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the
778 valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be
643 caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one.
731 "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner
787 to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell
782 them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
731 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who
was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of
787 the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who 643
was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be 731
no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to
the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking 787
him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again!

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in 643
which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the 769
central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself
sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with 788 ●
materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain 731
was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power.

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa 643
was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also 731
this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight.

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[1] p. 27.

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A 769
sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all
fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs 796
from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner.

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde 643
led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from 565
the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive 732 ●
their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them
to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, 726
all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned.

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain 000
was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

NYAKYUSA

000 structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the
secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent
upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true.
796 Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any
secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less
elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be
sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was
done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual
at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and
sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring
chiefdom alone.

643 Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed
622 to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by
565 offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise
769 and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While
731 among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider
powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to
have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people
would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or
"at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was
their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally
visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer
sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

778 And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola,
776 Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not
with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity
● 782 named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made
from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

771 Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to
643 notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in
565 the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde.
622 The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or
commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of
a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demigod;
he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them
shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but
the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual
a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

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[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwen-ifumbo etc.

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives
themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails
and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried
later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This
action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and
fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the
other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
789 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or
he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

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[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still 789
refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner. 782

Then there was *Mulima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of 789
doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamisa*, and so on.

8 There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and 789
the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Some- 771
times the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mwenekelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Mwenekelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Mulima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them.

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in 789
Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the 554
Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of 643
Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingila*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose

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[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gwabo*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general thoughout all this area.

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

And. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [574]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and I 764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

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[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [782] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, [769] in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imboto*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMwamba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

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[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

> 539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had perforations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations [778] on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [782] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with [643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who [372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

> 539 372 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

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[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mayibuye i Africa! Kehre wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

769 lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lubaga
643 and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers
[177] quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain,
769 and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lubaga (the grove of
782 Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lubaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mu-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lubaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lubaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lubaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

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[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 27.

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their 769
founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the 782
Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from
the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct
group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern
part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their
progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None
of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe
or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which
the 'divine kings' developed.

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and 769
not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not 643
know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande,
near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the [773]
originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from
the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a
way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the [173]
'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves
as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical
supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but
they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this
mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a
matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his
country was normally divided into two independent sections, each
ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and
reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent
chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and
their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs
have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, [636]
establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized [173]
peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing
unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated
forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of
the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa
people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja,
Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent [634]
chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they
varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men.

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period 173
all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 643

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[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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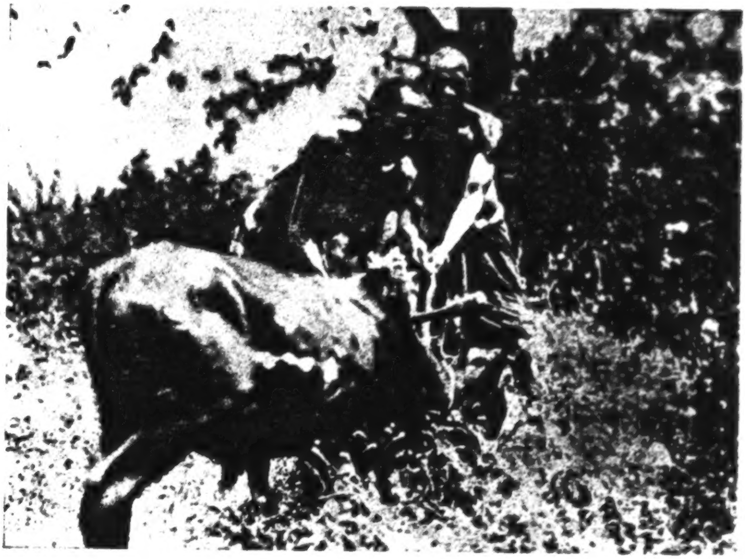

4*a*. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA

4*b*. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

643 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the
734 old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near
the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village
headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and
[177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position
as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which
he was treated, especially the terrible *ifingila*.

643 The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also
associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is
[554] saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of
chieftainship.

The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as
643 *unyago*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary
793 keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descend-
782 ant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with
Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwasesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

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[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] 643
without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be 793
much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] 782
conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in
some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as [753]
a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating [731]
groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had 643
also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just [793]
as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their
chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other [784]
priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.'
Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through
the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa [642]
there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and 782
libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the 789
Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and 751
ifika, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

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[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

782 789 751 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 789 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

778 769 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly, [782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

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[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikala*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *ulaja* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*unkota gwa ifuge*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum. 778 789 [782]

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum, They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *alaja* tree (a variety of *ficus*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *alaja* near Munyoso's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *alaja*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn[2] (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (9) may see them before they go to Lwembe'. 789 793 782 [778] [534]

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide supra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous 778 782

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[1] Probably grandson of 8₃ and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] *Ukililo* in Kinga, *ingongo kulu* in Nyakyusa. cf. plate 3a.

[3] Nyanduku, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bubililo (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you"'.

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
●782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the
priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood.
'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed,
then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of field-
work. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative
of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not
revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only
[177] one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his
character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisisya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no
longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching
God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send 177
rain.' But this no longer happens. 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who [773] visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded [789] by a miracle (*ifiko*).

> Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of 539 Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less 782 frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still [177] are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unnaldi* or *unkangulula*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*akutendekeya amfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses.

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow 643 priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first 793 Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the 782 Kimsule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks

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[643] [793] and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nsyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitega, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10*s.* and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering
[787] hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades wish a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper foreleg (*ijammapa*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity.
[731] The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1955) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in the house of Mwamalunguka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose 782 ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 8). There were present five chiefs of Mwakisisya's (56) line, including Mwanjala II (78), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalunguka himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson.

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[1] The sacred cut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 96.

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 12*s*., bought with 782 the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem 796 of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nsyanigwa, the Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpandapanda* tree [a [778] *ficus* planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard used to be, and during Mwakisisya's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kissoule was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kitega (*vide supra*) was not clear.

Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalunguka (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalunguka refused and Nsyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility [842] of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned by Nsyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nsyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nsyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga:

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kissoule, thou Mwamalunguka,[1] thou

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[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

> 782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
> 796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

> Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasu (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
[778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

> Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back 782
to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the 796
women.

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained:
'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to [784]
go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be [783]
alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young

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[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'

[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
[793] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful
[177] whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any
of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that
men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An
ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been
prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the
crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his
village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who
finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find
a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the com-
moner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the
priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests
of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey
Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the
bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga.
On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga
stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27).
Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied,
'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the
party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to
accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused.
Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your
place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other
words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a
house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be
angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

that their crop depended upon sacrifices at Lubaga). But five 782
minutes later, as if to illustrate the constant co-existence of dogma 796
and science, of economic and ritual effort, Kasitile commented on a very uneven field of millet saying: 'Its unevenness is due to the rubbish heaps. Where they burnt the rubbish the millet has grown well', as indeed it had.

The party went to the house of Mwakisopile, priest of Lubaga, and after a polite interval for greetings and small talk Kasitile proceeded to explain his business. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us, we do not sleep (*Kumwanya kutusambukile, tutikugona*). Therefore I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I have come to ask for bananas, and for maize.' So the host sent messages to Mwanjala III (79) and the priests Mwamalunguka and Kesa. Mwanjala II (78) and Kissoule the chief priest of Lubaga, were away from home. Kasitile had long been ailing (*vide infra*, pp. 121-41) and Kesa asked after his health. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us', repeated Kasitile, implying that his illness was connected with Lubaga, and hinting at the quarrel between the priests and men of Mwakisisya (56) of Lubaga and the priests and men of the chief Mwaipopo of Selya (*vide infra*, pp. 37-8). Mwakisopile (the host) repeated to Kesa the reason for the visit. 'Mwamukinga (i.e. Kasitile 86),' he said, 'and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda declare they do not sleep. They have come to ask for bananas and maize and children, and that the cattle may increase.' Kasitile added, 'The sky has made us still and silent. We long for the grove: since Mwakisisya (56) died we have wished for it. We have come to beg. I lie down wrapped in mats but the cold will not leave me. So I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I am hungry. Have I food? The earth is destroyed.'

Then Kesa and Mwakisisya (111) replied: 'We are astonished that the people of Selya don't sleep. We have heard nothing about it. I, Mwakisisya sleep all right. And only Mwakalobo (67 or heir) and Mwankuga (94) these two alone of all the Selya chiefs came to me. Most of the men in Selya insult us! Ask them who has remembered that they should sacrifice here?'

Kasitile answered: 'It was I, Mwakisambwe (30, i.e. Kasitile speaks as his great grandfather) who initiated it.'

Kesa: 'Yes, but who agreed to give you an animal?'

Kasitile: 'It was Mwalubange, it was Kajula (i.e. the chief Mwaihojo, 147).'

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He also admitted that the people of Selya had insulted the Lwembe, 'But,' he added, 'we have heard that Mwakisisya (111) himself, when someone does not sleep, says "All right", but does not offer a cow.' Thus Kasitile accused the chief of Lubaga who should be Lwembe, to his face, of being reluctant to provide cattle for sacrifice just as the chiefs of Selya were reluctant.

Then Mwalukuta interposed: 'But Kasitile, you admitted that you had injured your father, you had injured your mother.'

Kasitile: 'Yes, indeed it is so, I have injured[1] my father, I have injured my mother.'

That ended the discussion. Kesa fetched bananas and a huge calabash of thick milk for the men of Selya, and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda started eating at once. Kasitile reproved them: 'What? Do you eat anyhow?' They dropped the bitten bananas hastily. 'Do you not know that you have come here to ask for bananas, to ask for maize? We have come to Mwatonoka (29), to Mwakisisya (56), to Mwanjala (77), to Mwampondele (27) to ask for it. Kyala provided the food.' Then he took up his flask of thick milk and two bananas, and went over to the banana grove at a little distance and prayed aloud:

'You, Mwatonoka (29), you Mwanjala (77) . . . I have come, I Mwalubange (58), I Mwakagile (59) [Kasitile represents their descendants] I have come to beg for maize, to beg for bananas.' Then he came back and joined the party. He sent a large flask of milk over to the local priests; they wanted to refuse and leave all the milk for the visitors, eating only roast bananas, but Kasitile said: 'No, Kyala has provided the food, Kyala has provided it, let us all eat and be satisfied.'

During the meal Kesa and Godrey Wilson discussed steamships and aeroplanes, and the distance and fares to Europe. Mwamalunguka had been to Mbeya and described the wind of an aeroplane coming down and starting, most graphically. Mwanjala (78) wanted very much to go to Europe to see the country. Then Kasitile said: 'Let us go, friends, the rain is coming', so they got up and left, leaving the bull tied to the bananas; the Selya priests had nothing further to do with that; the Lubaga men would kill it at their own convenience.

On the journey back Mwamakunda apologized to Kasitile for having begun to eat before they prayed: 'I am sorry, Mwamukinga (44, addressing Kasitile by his grandfather's name), you have

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[1] *Nakendile*: literally surpassed, overstepped, with the implication of injuring.

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know 782
them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 796

Kasitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakisisya and Kasitile and agreed that Kasitile had got the better of Mwakisisya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kasitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

> Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakisisya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalunguka, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

> The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the [177]
> Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that
> Mwakisisya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*inyago*), [578]
> and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakisisya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.'

But of Kasitile's retort that Mwakisisya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalunguka said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kasitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were 769
talking of drought. Kasitile was quick to link this with the failure
to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of 782
the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwam- 796
buputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us.

> Where is the rain? [said Kasitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaijonga's

769 782 796 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating. That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

[344] Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. [731] [821] If the Lwembe or a rainmaker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] 753 771 And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111) of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves
[766] round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is
buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by
that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in
the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them
out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that
of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the
anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and
dead were placated with offerings.

In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
778 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
787 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would
● 782 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with
821 some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them
some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into
the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the
beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they
would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the
cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—
an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally,
they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly
always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make
an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had
mentioned.

But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
643 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
688 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the
787 names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all,
but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted
the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant
by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no 643
longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have
been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] [821]
whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came
soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu
again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde
would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not
rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was
certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they
had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the [787]
diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead
Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blas- [687]
phemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with
drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect [688]
of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the
plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the
Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all [651]
the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide* [789]
infra, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their
men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives
planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created
much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of [651]
the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The
country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus [769]
. . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in 643
the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly 132
shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a
matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nya- 771
kyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the 788
preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at
Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May
the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may [782] ●
the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not
injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility
that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year
after the break of the rains. 769

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 796

769 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit cere-
796 mony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

> [778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde
796 led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned
[721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

> When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray.
> ● [782] So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance,
[782] the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 The majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety
789 of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He
[352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a
[293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu.
[778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

> The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

> At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu—the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

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[1] These names are obscure.

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no 793 descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1936) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikubajila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According 643 to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa."' It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *mapemba*,[2] so the myth [173] of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants 782 of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of 793 the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hoes, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, [323] and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in BuKinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

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[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, p. 317.

[2] *Mapembe*—maize in Penja, but here it is contrasted with *ifilombe* (maize).

[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 262-3. [113] The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw hatchets and choppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
793 in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
[789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet
season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
778 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie
688 up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey
Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

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[177] [1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[323] [2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section 643 of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his 778 headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the 622 main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically.

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who [754] thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125).

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not [842] begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an [753] oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; [787] so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and [782] told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause.

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[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

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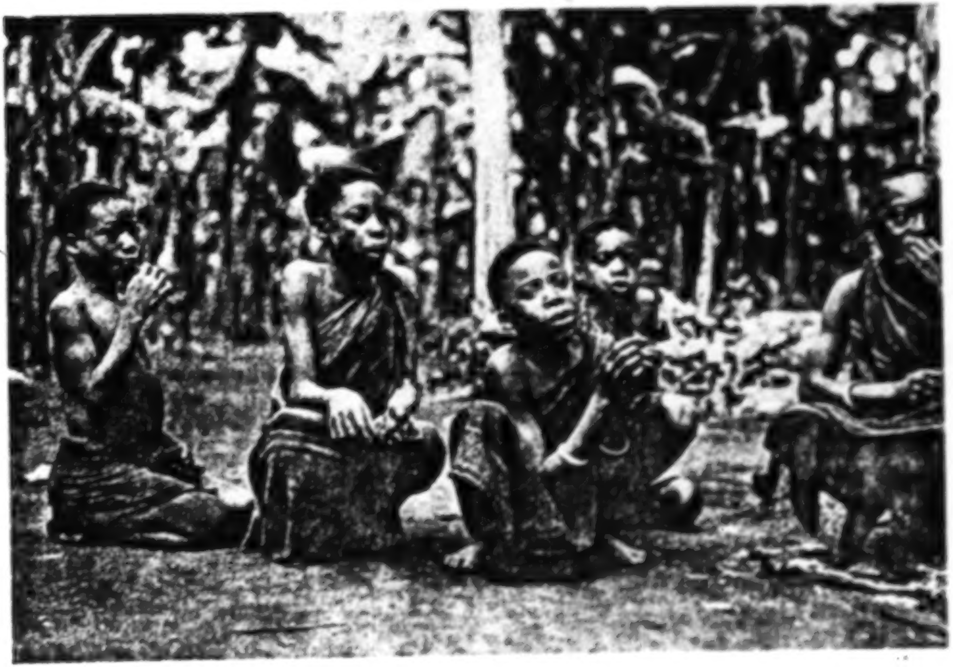
[Facing p. 70]



8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEF

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out'
around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to
769 saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in
[137] climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becom
a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. T
priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place
offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on
conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also
● [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing
and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which
particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expandi
lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree wh
sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (90) who had
occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is of
spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he
carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for bur
But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacri
there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (
the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the
food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) young
brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in
and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no
sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves
which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a g
many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifi
involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—
769 chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfath
and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branc
of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion
'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ances
only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which
[578] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operatio
[698] the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (80) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (90) by a month, as we shall see. 643 789 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to those periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee coming misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusolola*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungulula ingungulu* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ilisyele*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

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[1] *Ukusolola*—a breech presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *bagunda*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 73, 210.

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791 said just to become aware of future events without any dream.

787 *Abakungalala* are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abalaw' amalogo*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it [777] did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakungalala* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) 787 claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[3]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and 769 priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his 782 obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today [777] all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the [643] senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaya (on the lake shore): 22/10/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

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[3] According to Mr. Harkin's informants the [illegible] eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 21.

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor 769
plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not 782
plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted.
Kissoule tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (107, the priest- [177]
chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulabosya [643]
to ask Mwakisisile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulabosya and Mwakalobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulabosya sent me (Kissoule) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.'

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of 793
Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a 622
dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in
co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office 769
is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (86) and Nsamba (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*.

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black 769
bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces 782
of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(*b*) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769
782 In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (82). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobakosa and Kissogota[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup
[778] hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

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[1] Heirs of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grove.

plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), . . . thou Kalesi (18), Mwakalebela (19), . . . Mwakisisya (56) and Mwampondele (27), . . . Kikungubeja, Silobwike, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa,[1] . . . Mwaipaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile their child' (i.e. of Mwaipopo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) . . . 'Kyala is there . . . he sees Mwaipopo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. . . . 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubange (58) and others which had been accepted . . . 769 782

> Now Mwaipopo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selya . . . to Mwaisumo (62), Mwaitende (61). . . . You are proud (*ali namatingo*) to send so much hunger. . . . When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaijonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (38), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNdali, BuSangu, BuKinga, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kinga have come to Lubaga. Mwakisisya (111) has begun, Mwakagile [i.e. Mwaipopo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 59] sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaijonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior [778] village, where his *indola* tree still stands.[2] The talk turned on the

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[1] These four are the Kinga priests with hereditary titles, who serve at Lubaga.

[2] Why the grove was not beside the *indola* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

769 782 weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwaipopo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, [578] waiting for the other priests, Njobakosa and Kissogata. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is [784] forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kissogota.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobakosa arrived, and shortly after him Kissogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kissogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

[778] Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*isyammapa*) from both forelegs, and with Kissogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufiga*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaiteteja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kissogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

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[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwajonga's coming out or not, since his *[illegible]* was some hundreds of yards away.

> Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. 769 Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), 782 Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this.
>
> NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.
>
> KISSOOOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food [262] is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.'

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the [262] chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained:

> We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . [775] Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!'

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

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[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet [273] porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity.

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

> 769 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—
> ● 782 they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked
> you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades
> come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his
[793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up
[643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we
two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small
[123] boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and
[784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices
were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

> [869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food.
> Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice.
> Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

> I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

> You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that 782
if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'.

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 [793]
And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing.

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? 769
(p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of 782
informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between 821
the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, rain is expected with the *waning* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind.

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective [132]
for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer.

(*c*) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great- 769
grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief 782
Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga.

769 782 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, explained: [793]

> We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove. [177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place.... I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile.... Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat.... Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwaluseke to bring to Mbyanga ... as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

[132] There had been another spell of cold weather and the temperature on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove, [793] and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was [291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

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[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune. cf. p. 60.

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not 769
expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and 782
Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed
on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone.
Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the
'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put
firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared
in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize,
pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of
bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which
was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the
cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the
invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has
gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba
says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they
took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the
right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an
nkuju tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate
some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the
meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to
Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests ex- [515]
plained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with [834]
their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that
they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and
found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut
had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This [787]
was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he
could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who
should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and
were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a [783]
bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

769 In this grove of Kabale three chiefs in particular gather together,
782 Mwakilulele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela (66 K) and Mwakilasa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grave with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
[784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives
[778] them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there symbolize fertility (*mboto*), so that when we eat they may help us and
[784] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *ijammapa*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those 769
who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat
the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used 782
in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if [778]
something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow [784]
matches the fearfulness (*ubusisya*) of the grove. [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

> My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]
>
> They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula,
> had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate [173]
> in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing.

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the 769
groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa 782
(and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle 177
was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day:

> Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

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[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbamba* but the same passage refers to *Mbamba or Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

769 priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may
782 return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

177 A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyoso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kinga came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
>
> MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaihojo (147) about celebrating. . . .
>
> KASITILE: What did he say?
>
> MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .
>
> KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(*f*) THE FIRST FRUITS

769 No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the
Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is
782 collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which
[241] is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the
offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with
[793] his colleagues Kissogoia and Njobakosa, took it to Kalinga, senior
widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot
inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings
[778] of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some
informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and
hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new
crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with
the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once
been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

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[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 42.

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the 769
chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of 782
bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with
junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As
they drank they prayed:

> Oh thou Mwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

> The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the 631
advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly 166
stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their 561
neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live 361
with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to [183]
live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to [602]
another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(*b*) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the 643
groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, 561
as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of 796
Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village
headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described
as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the
chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his
power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his
father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent [554]
at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and
commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the
ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired
generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' [622]
are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen
are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible [782] ●
for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his
grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is
necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir
of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased
that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a
given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a
later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated
at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said
the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being [554]
'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in [769]
Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

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[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are 621
absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, 561
sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as 631
headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each [643]
generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen,
or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that com- [622]
moners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of
rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(*c*) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, 631
traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent 782
upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to
pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes.
The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley [643]
acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by
sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of [793]
hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and
Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa,
Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained.
Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him
the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledge-
ment of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who
later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa [438]
still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and
have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links
them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of [184]
lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to
have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common [326]
culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa,
are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the [721]

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[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a
common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as
having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living
[782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when
it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time
send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself
admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe
and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual
functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

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[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 789 778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case') on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifugo* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:[1]

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakalebela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamapondele* (27), *Mwakihaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwandemele (?), Mwakanjoki (60), Mwaijonga (82), Mwafungo (83), Mwamwifu (84), Mwakabule (117), Mwaipopo (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782] ●

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones —two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifula* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

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[1] The names italicized are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches 754
herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. 753
These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions].

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775]
As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to [685]
punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, 791
a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the
hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his 787
return Kasitile reported:

> Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute 753
> about the beer. I paid him 1*s*. and drank three preparations of medicine
> at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am [782]
> sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested
> testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he [778]
> has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He
> told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and [787]
> he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of 753
any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. 688
By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

> He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: [787]
> 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

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[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

753 685 [787] entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle', and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

● 782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying — or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a 787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 753 [791] [186] We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kibdeli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsaki, that we were coming. . . . He came in from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsaki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

[654] [778] Nsaki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsaki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up). Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand a' 'w? He stands with the fathers.' Nsaki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (side piece cut).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

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[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a bull.

755 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's
791 chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot
of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his
[769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held
the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and
children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told
Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead.
[793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda,
his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga
and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your
European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjeki (Se) did not know any
Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After
[668] your father died, when your older brother was alive, Europeans came
—Germans—and cut down a tree, the amandi tree in the sacred grove
[177] near Kasamu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in
BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards
[782] Mwaipopo (the chief 118) sought a sheep and they tried to put the
[783] grove to rights ('clear up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside
which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the
grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to
take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjeki (Se) that he should
not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile,
reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together
to the grove to pray (vide supra, p. 113) and Mwamakunda told me:
"Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house,
and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjeki has gone off in
a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the
753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken
769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you
668 have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and
186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree
by Mwakanjeki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals
and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for
783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro-
782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

[776] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a
cloth and so. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready), and we went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray: 783 782 [778]

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, with Mwakanjuki (80). You made friends with him before, now he has [illegible], 'we can make friends our friends.' [illegible] I make a mistake,' I have come to atone; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 99 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjuki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjuki (80), Lwembe (37), Mwakalobola (19), Mwantuuka (29), Mwalubange (98), Mwakagile (99), Mwaipopo (82), Kyala (1), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungulwila, Nyasingwa Kyamba Kinali,[7] Lwambilo (14) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (98), come if you are at Mwaisumbe's (81), come Mwakanjuki (80) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalobola (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamalinba (83), of Kanjuki (mother of 80), come. And he (G.W.) is innocent (*mweli*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamalinba (83), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[8] May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).' [769] [123] [789]

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[9] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer. [777]

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[7] These Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[8] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had cooperated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sanga diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[9] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

Record of G.W. 10/4/37

783 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's:
● 782 Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kissogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*ukujoba inongwa*) or spoke out (*ukusosya*) or prayed (*ukwiputa*). This half formal prayer (*ukwiputa*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by [688] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled [769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, "Who is there?" [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*sic*) back.'

Then Kastile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kissogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 59), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 121), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umusoli* tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this *umusoli* tree fall when Kasitile (60, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially 183
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece 782
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (ijemmeje) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I
followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778]
sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting
stump of an old umusoli tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769]
one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (57), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (57), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngubulu (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwai-
paja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would [834]
wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the com-
moner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned [689]
from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?"' [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684]
of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

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[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

783 782 [669] Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaitesya, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife [835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *deadly* incestuous.

[586] They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kimngota (the commoner priest). Kimngota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kimngota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kimngota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"'! He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 90) should become a fool? Kimngota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwandsagaje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we [794] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

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[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken 783
home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (90).'
And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' 782 ●
Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a [688]
swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) [776]
in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 99). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (ndesie), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (90); he stirred up himself.'

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 99) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakalude (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile enforced it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kimagota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 98) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the [576]
matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kimagota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisa (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relations.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kimagota and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the ritual fails.'

● 782 QUESTION: What does that mean?

KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

754 QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak [775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kissogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kissogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kissogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Malosha' (sic, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*[illegible]*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kissogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*[illegible]*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[668] QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*[illegible]*) on the mouth?[1] What about [775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come [753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

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[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people 754
speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The 775
witches do not come into it.

Question: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they 753
always call shades, or not?

Kasitile: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Question: But your sickness?

Kasitile: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [793]
The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!'

Question: What did he mean by that?

Kasitile: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Question: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

Kasitile: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night [782]
before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house,
I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not [776]
pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods,
all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa takwipata namesi ko kusyosya* [775]
ilinyo lyosa, lenga ndikwipata namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala [539]
gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.)

Question:

Kasitile: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft [787]
to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 177
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwanya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abasyuka*), the witches (*abaloŋi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and
died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782 ●
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was
contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has
remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

769 782 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his [684] [783] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain [764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming 769 out'.

783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

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[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[3] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

x 797 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I
x 795 hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about
583 them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty
584 miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying
that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and
please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My
father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a
Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory
marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has
x 795 been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages
[764] are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the
seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young
[585] men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival
● [782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The
sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the
country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest
feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months
[796] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly
because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades,
[688] Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not
participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend
the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the
feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church
[273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to
drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals
of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a
separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in
the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men
[535] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders,
[684] for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing
leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their 177
appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer [622]
held is obvious. [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped
altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone [561]
supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of [796]
the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was
due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there [643]
were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number
of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly
to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase
in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new
deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that
the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with
their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come
out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the
"coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's
personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the [782]
groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they
still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. [769]
The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to
come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were
sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a
season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling
the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but
not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when [771]
celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom
as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-
Christians are also sceptical.

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms
formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the [769]
shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in [796]
the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with
the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants
were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the
symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the
ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were
'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without
reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the
shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less

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[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 31, 98, 101, 111-13, 203.

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal
rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political
structure, and to consider in what measure the change from
paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the
society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political
changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in
religion.

The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes
182 from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and
773 benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth
and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people
769 of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity.
643 No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner
priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion
directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend
upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks
to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the
182 traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people
643 were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in
sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent
796 upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga)
● 782 both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde
the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade
in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged
as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond
had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for
food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership.
The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs
who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common
ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo
(147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled
later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of
the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

[p. 216]

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means 182
of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular 643
authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and 782
the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected 796
with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority.

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the 182
Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non- 769
relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth
of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came [773]
to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries.

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make 182
explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and 783
rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view 796
the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, 631
and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusosya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*)',

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[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99–112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with 765
the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove
(ilisyeto[11]*)* not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the
present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces [764]
from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block
about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth.
An *indola*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from
the basalt block.

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which 769
sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases 782
of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help.

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the
grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return
and some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this
occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from
the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where [766]
leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief
in conjunction with an *unnyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by [372]
twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled
anew from this "need-fire".

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in 787
Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be
a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the
chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing [164
women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 484]

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[11] Cf. *Johnston*, *ilisieta*, pl. *amasieta*, p. 450; *Mackenzie*, ilisyeto, burial place, p. 209; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *elisyeto*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 3.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nya- [561
kyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages"
(African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does 621]
not alter *G. Wilsons* statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 269 ff).

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt
for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he
was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the
ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits.
Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment
of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become
a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned
diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small
incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate
may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then
felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand
in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an 769
occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief
to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence
might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my
behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would
act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made
up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony
by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he
arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took
some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant.
Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help
his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[18] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 226.

[19] *Mackenzie* refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the familiy place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka)*: *amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [782] ●

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462